United Nations A/C.5/62/29

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 June 2008

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Fifth Committee
Agenda item 128
Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Letter dated 5 June 2008 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee

I have the honour to transmit herewith, for your attention and further consideration by the Fifth Committee, a letter dated 5 June 2008 from the Secretary-General concerning the need for the Secretariat to enter into commitments through 31 December 2008 in respect of associated costs related to the capital master plan, as well as for the enterprise systems for the United Nations (see annex).

(*Signed*) Srgjan **Kerim**

08-37061 (E) 050608

Annex

Letter dated 5 June 2008 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

I write to draw your attention to the need for the Secretariat to enter into commitments through 31 December 2008 in respect of the associated costs related to the capital master plan, as well as for the enterprise systems for the United Nations. At the same time, an integral part of both projects is the need to proceed with the Long Island City, New York, data centre. The preceding issues are the subject of reports contained in documents A/62/799, A/62/510/Rev.1 and A/62/477.

I understand that the work programme of the Fifth Committee and of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), notwithstanding the established roles and responsibilities of the two bodies, does not allow a full consideration of those reports at the present time owing to the need to focus on time-sensitive issues concerning peacekeeping operations. However, I would like to point out that both of the above activities concerning the capital master plan and enterprise systems relate to ongoing operations already agreed, in principle, by the General Assembly, for which a loss in momentum would greatly disadvantage the Organization at this time.

The above-mentioned reports seek approval of resources for activities that would be carried out in the period from 2008 through 2013. Clearly, the Fifth Committee needs adequate time to fully scrutinize the detailed proposals, which stretch from the current biennium through to future bienniums. As a break in activity would add substantial additional and unnecessary costs, I intend to obviate any unnecessary additional costs by maintaining programme momentum. This will require my entering into limited commitments for the balance of 2008, pending the review of the full proposals by the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee in the main part of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

Accordingly, I have re-examined the proposals with a view to identifying resources required in the immediate term to enable operations to continue smoothly for the next six or seven months. The review has identified that $9.5 million would be required to be committed to continue operations for the associated costs, $13.2 million for the relocation of the data centre to Long Island City and $10.4 million for the enterprise systems. You will appreciate that those figures, totalling $33.1 million, represent just a portion of the total level of resources forecast in each of the reports submitted.

In regard to the associated costs, the Assembly will recall that, in paragraph 43 of its resolution 62/87, it called upon the Secretary-General to, inter alia, make every effort to absorb associated costs within the approved budget of the capital master plan. It would appear unrealistic to hold out the prospect that the associated costs could be fully absorbed within the provisions already earmarked for the core capital master plan. However, the cash balance of funds in the capital master plan as of today exceeds $500 million, while the estimated resources required to be committed for the associated costs for the balance of 2008 would amount to $9.5 million.

With regard to the relocation of the data centre to Long Island City, the amount of $13.2 million would be required to be committed to ensure its timely relocation

and operationalization. The absence of the necessary commitments at the present time would jeopardize the capital master plan, as progress must be made for the design, construction and procurement of certain equipment, which involves long lead times to enable the data centre to be relocated from the Secretariat Building by mid-2009 (that is, the latest possible date for maintenance of the capital master plan schedule).

In the light of the above, and bearing in mind that failure to proceed with elements of the associated costs and the data centre would delay the core capital master plan project (at a cost estimated at $11.7 million per month), it is my intention, absent any objection from the General Assembly, to proceed to enter into commitments not exceeding $22.7 million ($9.5 million plus $13.2 million for the associated costs and the data centre) between now and 31 December 2008, drawing upon the available cash balance in the capital master plan account. In that connection, it may be noted that the balance in the capital master plan account has been augmented by approximately $30 million of interest earnings. The associated costs and data centre commitments would in no way hamper the progress of the core capital master plan operations already planned for 2008, but would ultimately require the Assembly to finance the associated costs and data centre requirements over and above the core capital master plan approved budget of $1.9 billion if efforts to absorb those costs do not prove fruitful.

In regard to the enterprise systems, the amount of $10.4 million required to ensure continuity of operations through 31 December 2008 could be financed from within the extrabudgetary financing component of $65.7 million that has been foreseen in the report (A/62/510/Rev.1, table 7). In the light of the above, it would also be my intention to continue, during the balance of 2008, initial preparatory actions for introducing enterprise systems in the United Nations in line with the approvals granted in principle by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/283.

I would request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly and that time be identified for consideration of the matter before the closure of the second resumed session of the sixty-second session of the Fifth Committee. You may be assured that the Secretariat will be fully available to assist you in any consideration you may wish to give to this letter.

I would therefore strongly recommend that you bring the contents of the present letter to the attention of the Fifth Committee and request the General Assembly to take note of them, with the full understanding that the detailed requirements for enterprise systems and capital master plan associated costs shall be subjected to the fullest scrutiny at its sixty-third session and that any further expenditures that could have an impact on assessed funds of the regular budget and the peacekeeping support account would not be committed without the express approval of the Assembly.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon